

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02467 231409Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----130623 231412Z /42  
O 231328Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1425  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2467

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR PGOV IS US  
SUBJ: PRESS LEAKS ON BEGIN/ATHERTON MEETING

1. WEDNESDAY MORNING'S NEWSPAPERS, ESPECIALLY HA'ARETZ, HIGHLIGHTED STORIES ABOUT THE BEGIN/ATHERTON MEETING THE PREVIOUS EVENING, FEB 21. BENZIMAN'S STORY IN HA'ARETZ IN PARTICULAR SHOWED OBVIOUS EVIDENCE OF SOME AUTHORITATIVE LEAKING, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO BEGIN'S REQUEST THAT ATHERTON TRY TO PERSUADE SADAT TO RECONVENE AT LEAST A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERUSALEM. OTHER PAPERS HAD SUBSTANTIAL DETAIL ON THE MEETINGS AS WELL.

2. AFTER HURRIEDLY CONSULTING WITH ATHERTON, I PASSED A STRONG MESSAGE TO BEGIN THROUGH YEHUDA AVNER TO EFFECT THAT THIS SORT OF LEAKING IS INTOLERABLE AND WILL MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ATHERTON TO HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF DOING THE THINGS IN CAIRO WHICH BEGIN HAD ASKED HIM TO TRY TO UNDERTAKE. MOREOVER, I SAID THAT THIS IS AN EXTREMELY UNHELPFUL PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS IN ATHERTON'S CONTINUING MISSION AND I WAS SURE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN, WHICH I EXPRESSED ON BOTH ROY'S AND MY BEHALF. AVNER IMMEDIATELY  
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CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD BEEN HORRIFIED TO SEE THE BENZIMAN ARTICLE AND WOULD RELAY MY MESSAGE TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY.

3. BEGIN TELEPHONED ME WITHIN THIRTY MINUTES TO SAY THAT HE THOROUGHLY AGREED WITH MY EXPRESSION OF DEEP CONCERN AND WAS EXTREMELY UPSET HIMSELF TO SEE THE MORNING PAPERS. HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS IMMEDIATE STAFF WERE TRYING TO

FIGURE OUT WHICH OF THE NUMEROUS ISRAELI PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CULPRIT, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT DOING SO. HE SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED WITH MY EXPRESSION OF WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE, AND ASSURED ME HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO AVOID REPETITIONS. HE SAID "AT LEAST I HAVE LEARNED A GOOD LESSON FROM THIS INCIDENT." HE ASKED ME TO APOLOGIZE SPECIFICALLY TO ATHERTON ON HIS BEHALF.

4. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS MUCH TOO LARGE TO HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE ABOUT ITS SECURITY IN ANY EVENT. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH ANY CREDIBLE THEORY ABOUT THE PROBABLY CULPRIT, BUT AT LEAST WE MAY HAVE INHIBITED HOLDING SUCH LARGE MEETINGS AT FUTURE ROUNDS OF ATHERTON'S MISSION AND PERHAPS EVEN INHIBITED THE LEAKING TO SOME SLIGHT EXTENT. BEGIN WAS CLEARLY SHAKEN, AND VERY MUCH ON THE DEFENSIVE. LEWIS

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** NEWS LEAKS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**TAGS:** PBOR, PGOV, IS, US, (ATHERTON, ALFRED), (BEGIN, MENAHEM)  
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